

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 113582

FOLLOWING REPEAT DACCA 2761 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CALCUTTA
COLOMBO ISLAMABAD KATHMANDU NEW DELHI RANGOON CINCPAC
MAY 3

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2761

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DEPT PASS AID/OFDA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, BG, BM

SUBJ: MEETINGS AND PRESS CONTINUE PROTESTS ON ARAKAN MUSLIMS;
FOREIGN SECRETARY AND BURMESE EMBASSY ACTIVE

REF: DACCA 2695

1. ALTHOUGH OVERSHADOWED IN THE PRESS BY THE NOMINATIONS
ON MAY 2 FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, THE BURMESE
BORDER ISSUE REMAINS ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE PRESS.
MAY DAY WAS THE OCCASION FOR SEVERAL POLITICAL
MEETINGS (IT WAS ALSO THE FIRST DAY ON WHICH MORE
OPEN POLITICAL ACTIVITY WAS PERMITTED) AND MOST
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INCLUDED SOME REFERENCE TO THE ARAKANESE MUSLIM MATTER
IN THE AGENDAS.

2. THE BURMESE EMBASSY HAS DISTRIBUTED TO DIPLOMATIC
MISSIONS (AND WE ASSUME ALSO TO THE PRESS AND OTHERS)
THE TEXTS OF ARTICLES CONTAINED IN THE WORKING PEOPLE'S
DAILY OF APRIL 30 AND THE GUARDIAN OF MAY 1. BOTH

ARTICLES DESCRIBE THE ACTION OF THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT:

"TO SCRUTINIZE EACH AND EVERY PERSON RESIDING IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE PURPOSE OF FRESH, SYSTEMATIC REGISTRATION OF CITIZENS AND FOREIGNERS" (GUARDIAN). IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THIS BELATED EFFORT BY THE BURMESE EMBASSY WILL CHANGE THE ALREADY CHARGED VIEWS OF THE BDG AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES.

3. PRESS ALSO REPORTS CONFERENCE HELD BY FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN AT COX'S BAZAR AIRPORT FOLLOWING A DAY TRIP TO THE CAMPS ON MAY 2. TABARAK SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BURMESE WERE CONTINUING AIMEDH
FORWARD "A CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE FOR THE RETURN OF THE EVICTEES TO BURMA" MCE CLAIMED THOSE EVICTED WERE BURMESE CITIZENS AND HAD A RIGHT TO RETURN. PRESS ALSO HAS NOTED THE VISIT OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES TO THE AREA. (EMBASSY DATT WILL BE BRIEFEDN MAY 3 BY THE DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AND WILL BE REPORTING SEPARATELY.)

4. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTS A TELEGRAM FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE BANGLADESH-UNITED STATES FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION TO PRESIDENT CARTER ASKING THAT THE PRESIDENT REQUEST THE UNITED NATIONS TO PROVIDE RELIEF ASSISTANCE AND THE PRESIDENT'S "INTERFERENCE" (SIC) TO STOP
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"EXODUS". EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED COPY; TEXT BEING TRANSMITTED SEPTEL. WE DO NOT BELIEVE RESPONSE IS REQUIRED. SECRETARY GENERAL IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE ASKED MUHAMMAD ALI TO INTERVENE IN HIS ROLE AS CONSUL GENERAL OF BANGLADESH IN CHICAGO. WE DO NOT HAVE COPY OF THAT MESSAGE. (COMMENT: WE DO NOT WORK THROUGH BANGLADESH-UNITED STATES FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION, VIEWING IT AS A LESS IMPORTANT GROUP OF SELF SEEKERS, BUT DO WORK WITH THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, A MORE PRESTIGIOUS GROUP.)

5. THE BURDEN OF PRESS REPORTS CONTINUES TO BE THE ATROCITIES ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN INFLICTED ON THE REFUGEES BY BURMESE OFFICIALS. SCHNEIDER.
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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